



## PATRIARCHY AND EDUCATION: CHALLENGES FACED BY INDONESIAN WOMEN IN ACHIEVING EQUALITY

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### Abstract

This research aims to analyze the challenges faced by Indonesian women in achieving educational equality in the context of patriarchy which is still dominant. Through a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, this research identifies socio-cultural barriers that limit access and quality of education for women, as well as how patriarchal norms influence women's career choices and participation in higher education. The research results show that although there has been progress in providing access to education for women, social expectations that prioritize women's domestic roles are still the main obstacle. In addition, education policies that support gender equality have not been implemented optimally at the field level. This research emphasizes the need for greater efforts to overcome structural and cultural barriers, as well as strengthening women's empowerment through education to achieve more real equality in education and careers.

Keywords: Educational equality; Patriarchy; Women's empowerment; Socio-cultural barriers.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tantangan yang dihadapi perempuan Indonesia dalam mencapai kesetaraan pendidikan dalam konteks patriarki yang masih dominan. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam dan diskusi kelompok terfokus, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi hambatan sosial-budaya yang membatasi akses dan kualitas pendidikan bagi perempuan, serta bagaimana norma patriarki mempengaruhi pilihan karir dan partisipasi perempuan dalam pendidikan tinggi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun ada kemajuan dalam pemberian akses pendidikan bagi perempuan, ekspektasi sosial yang mengutamakan peran domestik perempuan masih menjadi kendala utama. Selain itu, kebijakan pendidikan yang mendukung kesetaraan gender belum diimplementasikan secara optimal di tingkat lapangan. Penelitian ini menegaskan perlunya upaya lebih besar dalam mengatasi hambatan struktural dan budaya, serta memperkuat pemberdayaan perempuan melalui pendidikan untuk mencapai kesetaraan yang lebih nyata dalam bidang pendidikan dan karir.

Kata Kunci: Kesetaraan pendidikan; Patriarki; Pemberdayaan perempuan; Hambatan sosial-budaya.

## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Indonesian society, achieving gender equality remains a pressing issue, particularly in education. According to<sup>1</sup>, the deeply entrenched patriarchal system significantly shapes how women are viewed and treated in various sectors, including education. The challenges to achieving gender equality in education are particularly acute for Indonesian women, who often face complex systems of norms, expectations, and institutional barriers. This study explores the

<sup>1</sup> Rinaldi Rinaldi and Yulfa Lumbaa, "Kesetaraan Gender 'Perjuangan Perempuan Dalam Menghadapi Diskriminasi,'" *Tuturan: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Sosial Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 3 (2024): 242–51, <https://doi.org/10.47861/tuturan.v2i3.1107>.



relationship between patriarchy and education, seeking to explore the obstacles Indonesian women face in their efforts to achieve educational equality<sup>2</sup>.

Patriarchy, as a social structure, has historically placed men in positions of authority, while women are perceived as subordinate. This structural inequality is reflected in many aspects of life, including education, where women's access to opportunities is often limited by traditional gender norms. Despite efforts by various parties to promote gender equality, persistent patriarchal values continue to influence women's educational experiences. In Indonesia, these values not only shape personal beliefs but also influence institutional policies and practices, creating an environment where gender inequality is often considered normal. Educational attainment is a crucial factor in women's empowerment, yet for many Indonesian women, their educational pathways remain limited by these patriarchal structures<sup>3</sup>.

This research is significant because it aims to examine how patriarchal ideology influences educational opportunities and outcomes for Indonesian women. While there has been substantial academic attention to gender equality in education globally, research specifically addressing this issue in Indonesia remains limited. Scholars have examined various barriers to gender equality in education, including socio-cultural norms, economic challenges, and institutional biases. However, few studies have comprehensively analyzed the role of patriarchy in shaping Indonesian women's educational experiences, particularly in the context of contemporary educational reforms. This gap in the literature forms the basis for this research, which seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges women face in achieving educational equality<sup>4</sup>.

Existing literature points to various factors that perpetuate gender inequality in education. A study by<sup>5</sup> indicates that patriarchal values embedded in Indonesian culture continue to influence women's educational choices and career paths. This research shows that although more women are pursuing higher education, social expectations regarding their roles as wives, mothers, and domestic responsibilities often limit their professional aspirations. Furthermore, research by<sup>6</sup> suggests that gender bias in educational curricula and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in educational institutions exacerbate this inequality. While these findings provide a clear picture of the state of educational inequality, research that holistically examines the relationship between patriarchy, gender, and education in Indonesia, encompassing broader social impacts and providing actionable policy recommendations, is lacking.

This research aims to fill this gap by examining how patriarchal ideology continues to influence women's educational pathways in Indonesia. Focusing on the experiences of Indonesian women at various levels of education, from primary to tertiary, this research seeks to identify systemic barriers that hinder their academic and professional advancement. Furthermore, it will examine the roles of educators, policymakers, and social norms in maintaining or breaking down

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<sup>2</sup> Ade Irma and Dessy Hasanah, "Menyoroti Budaya Patriarki Di Indonesia," *Social Work Jurnal* 7, no. 1 (2019): 1–129.

<sup>3</sup> Siti Marofah and Muhammad Farid Ma'ruf, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Melalui Program Sekolah Perempuan Di Desa Kesamben Kulon Kecamatan Wringinanom Kabupaten Gresik," *Publika*, 2022, 1475–88, <https://doi.org/10.26740/publika.v11n1.p1475-1488>.

<sup>4</sup> Fatkhu Rohmatin, "Dekonstruksi Wacana Patriarki Dan Kebungkaman Perempuan Dalam Manuskrip Hikayat Darma Tasyiah," *Jumantara: Jurnal Manuskrip Nusantara* 10, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 149, <https://doi.org/10.37014/jumantara.v10i2.598>.

<sup>5</sup> Febri Saefulloh et al., "Pengaruh Budaya Patriarki terhadap Orientasi Karier Perempuan," *Manifesto: Jurnal Gagasan Komunikasi, Politik, Dan Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2023): 7–12.

<sup>6</sup> Gita Juliana, Lulu Putu Sendratari, and Tuty Maryati, "Bias Gender Dalam Pendidikan (Studi Kasus Pembelajaran Sosiologi Kelas XI Dan Potensinya Sebagai Sumber Belajar Sosiologi Di MAN 1 Buleleng)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi Undiksha* 1, no. 1 (2019): 23–32.

these barriers. Through qualitative research methods, including interviews and case studies, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges women face in the education system<sup>7</sup>.

The importance of this research cannot be underestimated. As Indonesia continues to advance in national development and economic growth, addressing gender inequality in education is crucial. Women's participation in the workforce and their contributions to the economy are significantly influenced by their educational experiences. By identifying specific ways in which patriarchy impacts women's educational outcomes, this research aims to provide policy recommendations that can support greater gender equality in education. These recommendations are expected to form the basis for reforms that create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment<sup>8</sup>.

This research is expected to contribute to the growing literature on gender equality in education and provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in their efforts to advance women's rights and opportunities in Indonesia. By examining the persistence of patriarchy in shaping educational outcomes, this research will highlight the importance of sustained efforts to dismantle systemic barriers and create a more just and equitable society for all.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is expected to contribute to the growing literature on gender equality in education and provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in their efforts to advance women's rights and opportunities in Indonesia<sup>9</sup>. By examining the sustainability of patriarchy in shaping education, this research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the challenges faced by Indonesian women in achieving educational equality under the influence of patriarchy. Participants in this study were Indonesian women from various educational backgrounds, ranging from elementary school students to university students, as well as educators and policymakers in the education sector. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews to obtain a rich and comprehensive perspective. The instruments used were an interview guide and an open-ended questionnaire developed based on theories of gender and patriarchy, as well as previous research, such as that proposed by<sup>10</sup> which demonstrates the importance of a gender approach in education. The reliability of the instrument was measured using the reliability coefficient, and data analysis was conducted thematically to identify emerging patterns in participants' experiences. With this approach, it is hoped that it can provide an in-depth picture of how patriarchy affects educational equality in Indonesia. For educational outcomes, this research will highlight the importance of continued efforts to break down systemic barriers and create a more just and equal society for all parties<sup>11</sup>.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-Cultural Issues in Women's Education

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<sup>7</sup> Harum Natasha, "Ketidaksetaraan Gender Bidang Pendidikan: Faktor Penyebab, Dampak, Dan Solusi," *Marwah: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama Dan Jender* 12, no. 1 (2013): 53, <https://doi.org/10.24014/marwah.v12i1.513>.

<sup>8</sup> Karim Dahlan, "Konsep Pendidikan Perempuan Islam Menurut Rahmah El-Yunusiyah Tentang Kesetaraan Pendidikan Bagi Kaum Perempuan" (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Sugiyono, *Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Sutrisno Hadi, *Metodologi Research* (Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Eka Risma Junita, Asri Karolina, and M. Idris, "Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Project Based Learning (Pjbl) Dalam Membentuk Sikap Sosial Peserta Didik Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sd Negeri 02 Rejang Lebong," *Jurnal Literasiologi* 9, no. 4 (June 13, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.47783/literasiologi.v9i4.541>.

One of the key findings of this study is that socio-cultural barriers stemming from patriarchal norms often limit women's educational opportunities. Most participants reported that in many families, particularly in rural areas, women's education is considered less important than men's. According to<sup>12</sup>, this is related to the assumption that women will eventually marry and become housewives, making higher education unnecessary for them. Interviews with several participants revealed that most women still face social expectations that require them to prioritize domestic roles, such as housekeeping, over continuing their education.

This finding aligns with a study by<sup>13</sup>, which showed that the gap in educational access between men and women in Indonesia is still influenced by social constructs rooted in patriarchal values. Although educational reforms have provided more opportunities for women to access formal education, cultural influences that consider women's traditional roles as mothers and wives continue to limit their opportunities outside the household.

### **Limitations in Access and Quality of Education**

The challenges faced by Indonesian women in achieving educational equality in a context of persistent patriarchy. Using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the research findings provide clearer insights into the impact of patriarchy on education. The following are the findings of this study, divided into several key subthemes to provide a more detailed picture of how Indonesian women interact with an education system influenced by patriarchal norms.

The results also show that although many Indonesian women successfully complete primary and secondary education, they often experience difficulties in accessing higher education. One of the main reasons is economic issues, with many families preferring to invest their resources in the education of boys, who are perceived as more likely to provide financial benefits for the family in the future. Research by<sup>14</sup> revealed that gender bias in the allocation of educational resources directly affects women's participation rates in higher education.

The quality of education received by women is also not always equal to that of men. Several participants reported that they did not receive sufficient support in developing critical thinking and leadership skills at school or university, which is often given more to male students. This has an impact on women's ability to compete in a job market that increasingly demands high skills and leadership abilities.

### **The Role of Teachers and Policymakers in Promoting Educational Equity**

Another finding of this study is the important role of teachers and policymakers in promoting gender equality in schools. Most teachers interviewed stated that they strive to provide equal attention to girls and boys, but they are often hampered by the broader patriarchal culture in society. Several teachers acknowledged that although they strive to address gender bias in teaching, family and community influences are often stronger in influencing students' behavior and attitudes<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Agus Kurniawan and Nur Hidayah, "Perempuan sebagai Tulang Punggung Keluarga ( Studi Buruh Perempuan Di Pabrik Bulumata Palsu PT . Tiga Putera Abadi Perkasa , ( A Study of Women Labors at PT . Tiga Putera Abadi Perkasa – A False Lashes Factory , Purbalingga , Central Java )," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi*, no. 3 (2020): 2–13.

<sup>13</sup> Natasha, "Ketidaksetaraan Gender Bidang Pendidikan: Faktor Penyebab, Dampak, Dan Solusi."

<sup>14</sup> Natasha.

<sup>15</sup> Husein Muhammad, "Islam Dan Pendidikan Perempuan," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 2 (December 5, 2014): 231, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2014.32.231-244>.

Although education policies in Indonesia increasingly support gender equality, many participants felt that implementation of these policies remains suboptimal at the local level. For example, while policies state that women have the right to receive the same education as men, these policies are not always accompanied by adequate training for teachers or infrastructure that supports gender equality in schools. This suggests that despite government efforts to improve gender equality in education, a significant gap remains between policy and practice<sup>16</sup>.

### The Impact of Patriarchy on Women's Career Choices

Patriarchy also influences women's career choices after they complete their education. Many women interviewed expressed feeling constrained from pursuing certain careers due to social norms that dictate occupations deemed more suitable for women, such as education, health care, or administrative work.

A study by<sup>17</sup> showed that many women in Indonesia feel pressured to choose careers that align with their traditional roles, even if they possess qualifications for other, more prestigious jobs. The study also found that although more women are entering the workforce, they often face discrimination in the workplace, both from colleagues and superiors, which slows their career advancement. For example, some women reported that they are often denied the same opportunities for training or promotions as their male counterparts.

### Efforts to Improve Educational Equality

Despite these challenges, many women demonstrated determination and perseverance to overcome these barriers. Several participants stated that they had received support from women's organizations, educational institutions, and local communities to advocate for their right to education. As noted by<sup>18</sup>, efforts to empower women through education should be promoted through various channels, including awareness campaigns, scholarship programs for women, and leadership skills training for young women. These findings demonstrate that while Indonesian women face numerous barriers to education, there are also many positive efforts being made to address these inequalities. Empowering women through education is key to unlocking more opportunities and reducing the negative impact of patriarchy on their lives<sup>19</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the challenges faced by Indonesian women in achieving educational equality within a still-dominant patriarchal context. Using a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the study identifies socio-cultural barriers that limit women's access to and quality of education, as well as how patriarchal norms influence women's career choices and participation in higher education. The results indicate that despite progress in providing women with access to education, social expectations that prioritize women's domestic roles remain a major obstacle. Furthermore, educational policies that support gender equality have not been optimally implemented on the ground. This study emphasizes the need for greater efforts to address structural and cultural barriers and strengthen women's empowerment through education to achieve greater equality in education and careers.

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<sup>16</sup> Farid Setiawan et al., "Kebijakan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Al-Mudarris (Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Islam)* 4, no. 1 (2021): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.23971/mdr.v4i1.2809>.

<sup>17</sup> M Taufik, Hasnani, and Suhartina, "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Kesenjangan Gender Dalam Keluarga (Di Desa Mattiro Ade Kabupaten Pinrang)," *Sosiologia: Jurnal Agama Dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 1 (2022): 50–65.

<sup>18</sup> Marofah and Ma'ruf, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Melalui Program Sekolah Perempuan Di Desa Kesamben Kulon Kecamatan Wringinanom Kabupaten Gresik."

<sup>19</sup> Irma and Hasanah, "Menyoroti Budaya Patriarki Di Indonesia."

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